

FIELD REPORT

UNDISCOVERED EASTERN COLOMBIA: BIRDING SECRETS OF THE WHITE SANDS OF INIRIDA JANUARY 8–15, 2022



Yapacana Antbird (*Aprositornis disjuncta*). Photo: D. Ascanio.

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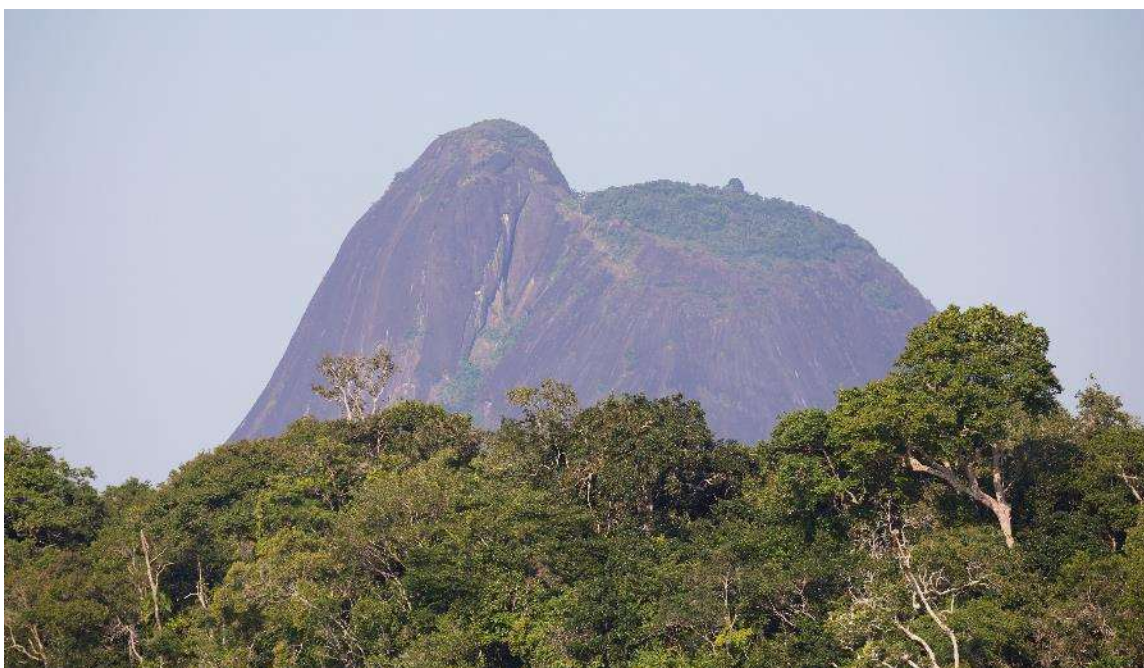
By David Ascanio

Photo album:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/72177720296138348>

eBird Trip Report:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/32351>



Mavecure Hills with riverine forest in foreground. Photo: D. Ascanio.

Mysterious, warm, wild, at times seeming unwelcoming, but ready to be discovered. As soon as the plane began its descent to Puerto Inirida, we could see a green expanse of forest, sinuous rivers with oxbow lakes, sandy beaches, and clearings for subsistence farming. It didn't take much time to realize that this "green carpet" was much more diverse than how it appeared from the plane. There was a stunted vegetation forest-type (growing on sandy soil), a tall forest (*varzea*, floodable forest in white water rivers), a tributary with *igapó* (floodable forest in black water rivers), scrubby vegetation, and patches of natural grasslands. Each habitat was eventually visited during this tour, and we nailed several specialties of each of these unique ecosystems.

Early mornings were wonderful, with nice temperatures and soft light. As the day warmed up, it was time to explore the inside of the forest. A walk on the Sabanita Trail gave us the opportunity



Spotted Puffbird, *Bucco tamatia*.
Photo: D. Ascanio

to enjoy the beauty of the male Pompadour Cotinga. Also, we were touched by the soft calls and pretensions of the much smaller White-browed Purpletuft. After midmorning, outside in the grassland, the temperature had increased dramatically, and we could not understand how a bird with a black mantle such as the Swallow-winged Puffbird could tolerate the exposure in the heat while spending much of the day perched on a bare branch.

On another day we visited the trail leading to the community of Matraca. The birding was non-stop, as if there were a requested order of appearances. But having a birdy morning wasn't a coincidence. The forest structure was virtually untouched, and the emergent trees with enormous buttresses had canopies filled with vines and bromeliads; this density of plants was visible every

time we raised our heads in search of a bird. The forest understory was also occupied by other species such as the Blackish-gray Antshrike, Common Scale-backed Antbird, and Green-tailed Jacamar. Some birds were difficult to see, while others came nicely to the forest edge. One example was a male Giant Antshrike that appeared completely in the open allowing superb views.



Great Antshrike, *Taraba major*. Photo: D. Ascanio.

We also birded open areas such as the stunted white sandy belt forest of Caño Culebra and the savannas of Curva de los Pepes, where we enjoyed a close encounter with the unique White-naped Seedeater. Later, we paid a short visit to the river-island vegetation of La Rompida (located

in another department, Vichada), where we were rewarded with views of Chestnut-backed Antshrike, Plain-crowned Spinetail, and Orange-headed Tanager.



White-naped Seedeater, *Sporophila fringiloides*. Photo: D. Ascanio.

The Mavecure Hills were the geological highlight of the tour. Approaching these gigantic domes seemed surreal, almost as if we were on another planet. A walk to a flat outcrop contiguous to the community allowed us to add Peregrine Falcon (a rare boreal migrant in this part of the world), Paradise Tanager, and Paradise Jacamar. But there was this incessant heat that projected from the rocks. And yet, the birding was, as always, superb! The day closed with views of two Orange-breasted Falcons chasing away vultures as they flew close to the hill's ridge. We concluded that they might have been nesting.

Colombia's social and economic reality has changed over the last decade. Today, many areas that were forbidden in the past are open and safe to visit. In this country, wonderful birds coexist with severe social differences. We hope that the birding industry helps increase access to a better standard of living for those who have been neglected over decades. Seeing the contrast of life in Puerto Inirida to that of Bogotá helped me to understand the forces that originated the literary genre called Magical Realism. Gabriel García Márquez (probably the best Colombian writer ever with his famous *One Hundred Years of Solitude*) once said that "living" a magical realism helped in his childhood to deal with the enormous contrasts of Colombian society.

As the plane took off from Puerto Inirida, we kept our faces in the windows, seeing with different eyes these rivers, great expanses of forest, and sand bars. It was simply spectacular, or, I would say, "magically spectacular."



Wire-tailed Manakin, *Pipra filicauda*. Photo: D. Ascanio.

Now that you have visited the impressive ecosystems surrounding the Inirida River, please consider joining me in other destinations, hosting a unique flora and fauna. Some of these tours are:

Cuba, Birds & Culture: Supporting the Cuban People Program.

Photo album of the 2019 tour:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/72157706744663161>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ylRHvBljzdl>

The Amazon River Cruise

Photo album of the 2020 tour:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/72157713511166666>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1b3xYG0cPSo>

Colombia: Magdalena River Valley & Western Andes.

Photo album of the 2019 tour:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/72157709903582576>

I look forward to seeing you again!



Bronzy Jacamar, *Galbula leucogastra*. Photo: D. Ascanio.

ITINERARY:

09 Jan 2022. Caño Culebra.
10 Jan 2022. Sabanita. Curva de los Pepes.
11 Jan 2022. Matraca trail. Caño Cunuven.
12 Jan 2022. El Paujil trail. La Rompida.
13 Jan 2022. Cerros de Mavicure.
14 Jan 2022. Flor de Inirida trail.

KEY:

Red – Examples of white sandy soil species, mostly Guianan in distribution

Blue - Boreal Migrants (few)

Boldface - Rare, unusual or of interest for varying reasons

H: heard only

Remarks: to explore detailed information about each sighting (date and number of individuals seen), please refer to the eBird Trip List posted in the link above.

BIRDS:

Tinamous, Tinamidae

Cinereous Tinamou, *Crypturellus cinereus*. H

Little Tinamou, *Crypturellus soui*. H

Chachalacas, Cracidae

Variable Chachalaca, *Ortalis motmot*.

Pigeons & Doves, Columbidae

Rock Pigeon. *Columba livia*.

Pale-vented Pigeon, *Patagioenas cayennensis*.

Scaled Pigeon, *Patagioenas speciosa*.

Ruddy Pigeon, *Patagioenas subvinacea*.

Common Ground-Dove. *Columbina passerina*.

Plain-breasted Ground-Dove, *Columbina minuta*.

Ruddy Ground-Dove, *Columbina talpacoti*.

Cuckoos, Cuculidae

Smooth-billed Ani, *Crotophaga ani*.

Squirrel Cuckoo, *Piaya cayana*.

Nightjars & Allies, Caprimulgidae

Least Nighthawk, *Chordeiles pusillus*,

Common Nighthawk, *Chordeiles minor*.

Band-tailed Nighthawk, *Nyctiprogne leucopyga*.

Swifts, Apodidae

Short-tailed Swift, *Chaetura brachyura*.

Gray-rumped Swift, *Chaetura cinereiventris*.

Ashy-tailed Swift. *Chaetura andrei*. This sighting needs further confirmation. There is a photo records posted in the eBird checklist.

Fork-tailed Palm-Swift, *Tachornis squammata*.

Hummingbirds, Trochilidae

Little Hermit. *Phaethornis longuemareus*. H.

Black-eared Fairy, *Heliothryx aurita*.
Green-tailed Goldenthrout, *Polytmus theresiae*.
Fork-tailed Woodnymph, *Thaluraina furcata*.
Versicolored Emerald, *Chrysuronia versicolor*.
Glittering-throated Emerald, *Chionomesa fimbriata*.
White-chinned Sapphire. *Chlorestes cyanus*.
Blue-chinned Sapphire. *Chlorestes notata*.

Rails, Gallinules & Coots, Rallidae

Russet-crowned Crake, *Anurolimnas viridis*.

Plovers & Lapwings, Charadriidae

Southern Lapwing, *Vanellus chilensis*.

Jacanas, Jacanidae

Wattled Jacana, *Jacana jacana*.

Sandpipers & Allies, Scolopacidae

Spotted Sandpiper, *Actitis macularius*.

Gulls, Terns & Skimmers, Laridae

Yellow-billed Tern, *Sternula superciliaris*.

Large-billed Tern, *Phaetusa simplex*.

Black Skimmer, *Rynchops niger*.

Sunbittern, Eurypygidae

Sunbittern, *Eurypyga helias*.

Storks, Ciconiidae

Wood Stork, *Mycteria americana*.

Anhingas, Anhingidae

Anhinga, *Anhinga anhinga*.

Cormorants & Shags, Phalacrocoracidae

Neotropic Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*.

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns, Ardeidae

Cocoi Heron, *Ardea cocoi*.

Great Egret, *Ardea alba*.

Little Blue Heron, *Egretta caerulea*.

Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*.

Striated Heron, *Butorides striata*.

Capped Heron, *Pilherodius pileatus*.

Ibises and Spoonbills, Threskiornithidae

Green Ibis, *Mesembrinibis cayennensis*. H.

Bare-faced Ibis, *Phimosus infuscatus*.

New World Vultures, Cathartidae

Black Vulture, *Coragyps atratus*.

Turkey Vulture, *Cathartes aura*.
Greater Yellow-headed Vulture, *Cathartes melambrotus*.

Osprey, Pandionidae

Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus*.

Hawks, Eagles & Kites, Accipitridae

Pearl Kite, *Gampsonyx swainsoni*.
Swallow-tailed Kite, *Elanoides forficatus*.
Black-collared Hawk, *Busarellus nigricollis*.
Plumbeous Kite, *Ictinia plumbea*.
Slate-colored Hawk, *Buteogallus schistaceus*.
Savanna Hawk, *Buteogallus meridionalis*.
Great Black Hawk, *Buteogallus urubitinga*.
Roadside Hawk, *Rupornis magnirostris*.
Short-tailed Hawk, *Buteo brachyurus*.

Owls, Strigidae

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, *Glaucidium brasilianum*.

Trogons, Trogonidae

Green-backed Trogon, *Trogon viridis*.

Kingfishers, Alcedinidae

Ringed Kingfisher, *Megaceryle torquata*.
Amazon Kingfisher, *Chloroceryle amazona*.
Green Kingfisher, *Chloroceryle americana*.

Puffbirds, Bucconidae

Spotted Puffbird, *Bucco tamatia*.
Black-fronted Nunbird, *Monasa nigrifrons*.
Swallow-winged Puffbird, *Chelidoptera tenebrosa*.

Jacamars, Galbulidae

Green-tailed Jacamar, *Galbula gálbula*.
Bronzy Jacamar, *Galbula leucogastra*.
Paradise Jacamar, *Galbula dea*.
White-eared Jacamar, *Galbalcyrhynchus leucotis*.

New World Barbets, Capitonidae

Gilded Barbet, *Capito auratus*.

Toucans, Ramphastidae

Lettered Aracari, *Pteroglossus inscriptus*.
Many-banded Aracari, *Pteroglossus pluricinctus*.
White-throated Toucan, *Ramphastos tucanus*. H.

Woodpeckers, Picidae

Orinoco Piculet, *Picumnus pumilus*.
Golden-spangled Piculet, *Picumnus exilis*.
Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, *Melanerpes cruentatus*.

Red-stained Woodpecker, *Dryobates affinis*.
Red-necked Woodpecker, *Campephilus rubricollis*.
Crimson-crested Woodpecker, *Campephilus melanoleucos*.
Lineated Woodpecker, *Dryocopus lineatus*.
Scale-breasted Woodpecker, *Celeus grammicus*.
Cream-colored Woodpecker, *Celeus flavus*.
Yellow-throated Woodpecker, *Piculus flavigula*.

Falcons & Caracaras, Falconidae

Black Caracara, *Daptrius ater*.
Crested Caracara, *Caracara cheriway*.
Yellow-headed Caracara, *Milvago chimachima*.
Laughing Falcon, *Herpetotheres cachinnans*.
Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus*.
Bat Falcon, *Falco ruficularis*.
Orange-breasted Falcon, *Falco deiroleucus*.

New World and African Parrots, Psittacidae

Cobalt-winged Parakeet, *Brotogeris cyanoptera*.
Maroon-tailed Parakeet, *Pyrrhura melanura*.
Orange-cheeked Parrot, *Pytilia barrabandi*.
Blue-headed Parrot, *Pionus menstruus*.
Mealy Parrot, *Amazona farinosa*.
Orange-winged Parrot, *Amazona amazonica*.
Brown-throated Parakeet, *Eupsittula pertinax*.
Blue-and-yellow Macaw, *Ara ararauna*.
Chestnut-fronted Macaw, *Ara severus*.
Scarlet Macaw, *Ara macao*.
Red-and-green Macaw, *Ara chloroperus*.

Typical Antbirds, Thamnophilidae

Great Antshrike, *Taraba major*.
Black-crested Antshrike, *Sakesphorus canadensis*.
Chestnut-backed Antshrike, *Thamnophilus palliatus*.
Mouse-colored Antshrike, *Thamnophilus murinus*.
Blackish-gray Antshrike, *Thamnophilus nigrocinereus*.
Cinereous Antshrike, *Thamnomanes caesius*.
Spot-winged Antshrike, *Pygiptila stellaris*.
Pygmy Antwren, *Myrmotherula brachyura*.
***Cherrie's Antwren, *Myrmotherula cherriei*.**
Amazonian Streaked-Antwren, *Myrmotherula multostriata*.
White-flanked Antwren, *Myrmotherula axillaris*, pairs at Matraca and El Paujil trail
Gray Antwren, *Myrmotherula menetriesii*.
Dot-winged Antwren, *Microrhophias quixensis*. H.
Imeri Warbling-Antbird, *Hypocnemis flavescens*.
Dusky Antbird, *Cercomacra tyrannina*.
White-browed Antbird, *Myrmoborus leucophrys*.
Black-chinned Antbird, *Hypocnemoides melanopogon*.
Yapacana Antbird, *Aprositornis disjuncta*.
Dot-backed Antbird, *Hylophylax punctulatus*.
Common Scale-backed Antbird, *Willisornis poecilinotus*.

Black-spotted Bare-eyed, *Phlegopsis nigromaculata*.

Antthrushes, Formicariidae

Rufous-capped Antthrush, *Formicarius colma*.

Ovenbirds & Woodcreepers, Furnariidae

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper, *Glyphorhynchus spirurus*.

Long-billed Woodcreeper, *Nasica longirostris*.

Amazonian Barred-Woodcreeper, *Dendrocolaptes certhia*.

Striped Woodcreeper, *Xiphorhynchus obsoletus*.

Buff-throated Woodcreeper, *Xiphorhynchus guttatus*.

Straight-billed Woodcreeper, *Dendroplex picus*.

Curve-billed Scythebill, *Campylorhamphus procurvoides*.

Cinnamon-rumped Foliage-Gleaner, *Philydor pyrrhodes*. H.

Orinoco Softtail, *Thripophaga cherriei*.

Rusty-backed Spinetail, *Cranioleuca vulpina*.

Speckled Spinetail, *Cranioleuca gutturata*.

Plain-crowned Spinetail, *Cranioleuca gujanensis*.

Manakins, Pipridae

Dwarf Tyrant-Manakin, *Tyranneutes stolzmanni*.

Black Manakin, *Xenopipo atronitens*.

Yellow-crowned Manakin, *Heterocercus flavivertex*.

Wire-tailed Manakin, *Pipra filicauda*.

White-crowned Manakin, *Dixiphia pipra*.

Golden-headed Manakin, *Ceratopipra erythrocephala*.

Cotingas, Cotingidae

Amazonian Umbrellabird, *Cephalopterus ornatus*.

Capuchinbird, *Perissocephalus tricolor*, H.

Spangled Cotinga, *Cotinga cayana*.

Screaming Piha, *Lipaugus vociferans*.

Pompadour Cotinga, *Xipholena punicea*.

Bare-necked Fruitcrow, *Gymnoderus foetidus*.

Tityras & Allies, Tityridae

Black-tailed Tityra, *Tityra cayana*.

Varzea (Greater) Schiffornis, *Schiffornis major*.

White-browed Purpletuft, *Iodopleura isabellae*.

White-winged Becard, *Pachyramphus polychopterus*.

Chestnut-crowned Becard, *Pachyramphus castaneus*.

Tyrant Flycatchers, Tyrannidae

Helmeted Pygmy-Tyrant, *Lophotriccus galeatus*.

Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher *Poecilatriccus sylvia*.

Spotted Tody-Flycatcher, *Todirostrum maculatum*. H.

Yellow-margined Flycatcher, *Tolmomyias assimilis*.

Gray-crowned Flycatcher, *Tolmomyias poliocephalus*.

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet, *Camptostoma obsoletum*.

Mouse-colored Tyrannulet, *Phaeomyias murina*.

Yellow Tyrannulet, *Capsiempis flaveola*. H.

Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet, *Tyrannulus elatus*.
Forest Elaenia, *Myiopagis gaimardii*. H.
Yellow-crowned Elaenia, *Myiopagis flavivertex*.
Plain-crested Elaenia, *Elaenia cristata*.
Rufous-crowned Elaenia, *Elaenia ruficeps*.
Slender-footed Tyrannulet, *Zimmerius gracilipes*.
Amazonian Tyrannulet, *Sublegatus obscurior*.
Euler's Flycatcher, *Lathrotriccus euleri*.
Drab Water Tyrant, *Ochthornis littoralis*.
Cinnamon Attila, *Attila cinnamomeus*.
Citron-bellied Attila, *Attila citriniventris*. H.
Grayish Mourner, *Rhytipterna simplex*.
Pale-bellied Mourner, *Rhytipterna immunda*.
Swainson's Flycatcher, *Myiarchus swainsoni*.
Short-crested Flycatcher, *Myiarchus ferox*.
Lesser Kiskadee, *Pitangus lictor*.
Great Kiskadee, *Pitangus sulphuratus*.
Rusty-margined Flycatcher, *Myiozetetes cayanensis*.
Social Flycatcher, *Myiozetetes similis*.
Yellow-throated Flycatcher, *Conopias parvus*.
Piratic Flycatcher, *Legatus leucophaeus*.
Sulphury Flycatcher, *Tyrannopsis sulphurea*.
Tropical Kingbird, *Tyrannus melancholicus*.

Vireos, Shrike-Babblers & Erpornis, Vireonidae

Rufous-browed Peppershrike, *Cyclarhis gujanensis*.
Lemon-chested Greenlet, *Hylophilus thoracicus*. H.
Chivi Vireo, *Vireo chivi*.

Swallows, Hirundinidae

Black-collared Swallow, *Pygochelidon melanoleuca*.
White-banded Swallow, *Atticora fasciata*.
Southern Rough-winged Swallow, *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*.
Gray-breasted Martin, *Progne chalybea*.
White-winged Swallow, *Tachycineta albiventer*.

Gnatcatchers, Polioptilidae

Long-billed Gnatwren, *Ramphocaenus melanurus*.

Wrens, Troglodytidae

House Wren, *Troglodytes aedon*.
Thrush-like Wren, *Campylorhynchus turdinus*.
Coraya Wren, *Pheugopedius coraya*.
Buff-breasted Wren, *Cantorchilus leucotis*.

Mockingbirds & Thrashers, Mimidae

Tropical Mockingbird, *Mimus gilvus*.

Thrushes & Allies, Turdidae

Black-billed Thrush, *Turdus ignobilis*.

Finches, Euphonias & Allies, Fringillidae

Plumbeous Euphonia, *Euphonia plumbea*.

Purple-throated Euphonia, *Euphonia chlorotica*.

Golden-bellied Euphonia (White-lored Euphonia), *Euphonia chrysopasta*.

Thick-billed Euphonia, *Euphonia lanirostris*.

New World Sparrows, Passerellidae

Yellow-browed Sparrow, *Ammodramus humeralis*.

Troupials & Allies, Icteridae

Green Oropendola, *Psarocolius viridis*.

Crested Oropendola, *Psarocolius decumanus*.

Olive (Amazonian) Oropendola, *Psarocolius bifasciatus*.

Yellow-rumped Cacique, *Cacicus cela*.

Red-rumped Cacique, *Cacicus haemorrhous*.

Giant Cowbird, *Molothrus oryzivorus*.

Velvet-fronted Grackle, *Lamprosar tanagrinus*.

New World Warblers, Parulidae

Northern Waterthrush, *Parkesia noveboracensis*.

Yellow Warbler, *Setophaga petechia*.

Blackpoll Warbler, *Setophaga striata*.

Cardinals & Allies, Cardinalidae

Summer Tanager, *Piranga rubra*.

Rose-breasted Chat, *Granatellus pelzelni*.

Tanagers & Allies, Thraupidae

Masked Cardinal, *Paroaria nigrogenis*.

Black-faced Tanager, *Schistochlamys melanopis*.

Hooded Tanager, *Nemosia pileate*.

Gray-headed Tanager, *Eucometis penicillata*.

Fulvous-crested Tanager, *Tachyphonus surinamus*.

Red-shouldered Tanager, *Tachyphonus phoenicius*.

Silver-beaked Tanager, *Ramphocelus carbo*.

Masked Crimson Tanager, *Ramphocelus nigrogularis*.

Blue-gray Tanager, *Thraupis episcopus*.

Palm Tanager, *Thraupis palmarum*.

Burnished-buff Tanager, *Tangara cayana*.

Paradise Tanager, *Tangara chilensis*.

Orange-headed Tanager, *Thlypopsis sordida*.

Blue Dacnis, *Dacnis cayana*.

Purple Honeycreeper, *Cyanerpes caeruleus*.

Red-legged Honeycreeper, *Cyanerpes cyaneus*.

Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch, *Emberizoides herbicola*.

Blue-black Grassquit, *Volatinia jacarina*.

Chestnut-bellied Seed-eater, *Sporophila castaneiventris*.

Gray Seed-eater, *Sporophila intermedia*.

White-naped Seed-eater, *Sporophila fringilloides*.

Bananaquit, *Coereba flaveola*.

OTHER SPECIES:

Iniioidea

Pink River Dolphin, *Inia geoffrensis*.

New World Monkeys, Cebidae

Yellow-handed Titi Monkey, *Callicebus torquatus*.

Common Squirrel Monkey, *Saimiri sciureus*.

Invertebrates

Caligo Butterfly, *Caligo sp.*

Peacock Butterfly, *Anartia sp.*

Beetle, *Mallodonini*.

Aztec ants, *Dolichoderinae*.